

Senate Bill 437

By: Senators Golden of the 8th, Stoner of the 6th, Reed of the 35th and Powell of the 23rd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Part 2 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to competencies and core curriculum for elementary and secondary students under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to authorize the State Board of Education to develop and adopt a curriculum for a state funded elective course consisting of a nonsectarian, nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence on literature, art, music, culture, and politics; to provide for implementation by a local board of education; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Part 2 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to competencies and core curriculum for elementary and secondary students under the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended by adding at the end thereof a new Code section to read as follows:

"20-2-148.

(a) The State Board of Education is authorized to approve a curriculum for an elective state funded course consisting of a nonsectarian, nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence on literature, art, music, culture, and politics. The curriculum and associated textbook shall meet academic rigor and standards of the State Board of Education in the same manner as required for approval of any other elective course and textbook approved by the state board and shall meet the requirements of the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Georgia. The course provided for in this Code section shall:

(1) Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no attempt made to indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of the biblical materials or texts from other religious or cultural traditions;

1 (2) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible or
2 of texts from other religious or cultural traditions; and

3 (3) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs.

4 (b) A local board of education that elects to offer a course and utilize an associated
5 textbook approved in accordance with subsection (a) of this Code section shall implement
6 such course in accordance with the Constitutions of the United States and the State of
7 Georgia, including the manner in which the course is taught in the classroom and the
8 assignment by the local board of education of the individual teaching the course. The
9 individual assigned to teach the course shall meet all certification requirements and all
10 other provisions of this chapter relating to personnel employed by local units of
11 administration. In addition, no person shall be assigned to teach such course based in
12 whole or in part on any religious test, profession of faith or lack of faith, prior or present
13 religious affiliation or lack of affiliation, or criteria involving particular beliefs or lack of
14 beliefs about the Bible."

15 SECTION 2.

16 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.